

The Three Amigos In Iowa – Chapter 1 – What’s Happening?

“To tell you the truth Gar-Bear, I’m about ready to pack my stuff and head back to New Mexico,” Ron announced.

“What for, partner?” Gary asked, “Clarence and you just got here.”

“Ain’t no action here,” Ron said.

“What?”

“I expected to be able to kill me a bunch of them Krauts, but no, you had to put us on Home Guard duty,” Ron complained. “And those guys in Floyd just holed up in that café and then surrendered.”

“You’ll have to admit, we sure did improve our arsenals,” Gary suggested.

“We did that,” Ron admitted, “But what’s the point? The government will probably just come around and collect the automatic weapons anyway. And even if they don’t, punching paper isn’t my idea of using a rifle for what it was intended for. How many of the G36A2s did you end up with? I’ve got 8, 4 with and 4 without.”

“I have 12, 8 with and 4 without,” Gary said referring to the AG36 grenade launcher. “I think that Clarence ended up with quite a few too.”

“Where is Clarence?” Ron asked.

“Shirley and he went to Floyd to look for a home to buy,” Gary reported. “I think that Linda rode along, too. You know, partner, this whole thing with the UN and the government isn’t over yet.”

“My high school graduating class was bigger than the entire population of Floyd,” Ron said, “I sure hope she doesn’t find a home she wants us to buy. And what do you mean it isn’t over yet, the UN is pulling out as fast as they can.”

“They still have to finish up the impeachment proceedings and the trials of those Congressmen,” Gary pointed out.

“What about those terrorists who screwed up the power grid for the better part of a year and blew up all of those ANFO bombs?”

“Haven’t heard a word about it,” Gary said, “But, I’ll bet you an even grand that they’re pushing up 6 feet of dirt and we’ll never know what happened to them.”

“If we’ll never know, how can I collect that bet?” Ron chuckled. “You really think that the

CIA was behind it?"

"Ralph does and I agree with Ralph."

"What was the point? They didn't really do that stuff just to get the UN in, did they?" Ron insisted.

"We think so, partner," Gary said, "But we could be wrong. Have you noticed that the military isn't even talking about pickup of the automatic weapons?"

"I heard that there were a couple of those 5-ton military trucks in Charles City this morning," Ron commented.

"Collecting weapons?" Gary asked.

"No, since the military has that new HK416 (M416) and HK417 (M417), they suddenly find themselves overstocked on the M16's," Ron said. "What I heard was that they were issuing M416s and magazines to the Charles City Guard unit and collecting the M16's and magazines."

"It would be nice to have those M416s and M417s to add to our collections," Gary wished out loud.

"Who knows," Ron said, "Maybe they'll end out passing them out to civilians, too."

"Say, did you hear about those 8" cannons the Iowa Guard has?" Gary asked.

"No, what about them?"

"The Army considers them obsolete and Derek told me that the Guard requested that they be scraped in the field," Gary said. "Now if that happens, Derek said that they have a scrap dealer lined up to buy the entire battery. Seems like they have about 200 of the guns. The dealer is supposed to cut them up and sell them for scrap. Derek says that he's going to donate one to every American Legion and VFW Post in Iowa, fully functional with ammo."

"They use shells?" Ron asked.

"Nope. They have a projectile propelled by bags of gunpowder or something," Gary explained. "I checked it out on the net. Anyway, they are the M-115 cannons. They have 3 different projectiles, the M106 HE, the M404 HE/ICM and the M505 HE/DPICM."

"What does ICM mean?" Ron asked.

"Improved conventional munition," Gary said, "The projectiles are miniature cluster

bombs. The 404 has one type, the M42, and the 505 has a mixture of the M2 and M46. The M42 is antipersonnel and the M46 is dual purpose.”

“I think you’re both nuts to be talking about any more wars,” Clarence added his two cents.

“Hey Clarence, find a home?” Gary asked.

“Nice old two-story with a big attic and basement,” Clarence replied. “Ron, Linda wants to talk to you.”

Ron grumbled and went to see what Linda wanted, although he had a pretty good idea.

“What are the winters like around here, Gary?” Clarence asked.

“Most are reasonably mild, Clarence,” Gary explained. “Couple of feet of snow over the winter, zero at night and 20’s to 30’s during the day, sometimes a little warmer.”

I heard they had a terrible winter when the lights were out,” Clarence offered.

“I heard that too,” Gary agreed, “But they aren’t all like that. I do remember some terrible blizzards when I was a little kid, however.”

“How do you get around in the winter up here?” Clarence asked.

“Studded snow tires. And having 4 wheel drive helps, too,” Gary said. “But when it gets bad, you just don’t go out until they clear the roads. I have lived in Iowa much my life and one of the funniest things I have ever seen is people in the south (sunbelt states) trying to drive in slick and snowy conditions. Their main problem is that they drive too fast. A sure way not to get into a wreck is to just take it slow and easy and drive cautiously. No sudden moves. No quick stops. Stay the heck away from everybody else on the road. Don’t get close to anyone. There is no such thing as a quick stop on slick roads, ABS, AWD, snow tires or no.”

“What about chains?” Clarence asked.

“If you have to use chains, you should just stay home, Clarence,” Gary opined. “I never liked chains. With these radial tires, you have to use a special type of chain anyway. But what the hell do I know, I still remember when everything was simple, like back in the ‘50’s.”

“Quit living in the past, partner,” Ron said returning to the room.

“What did Linda want?” Gary asked.

“Linda wanted to inform me that we are now Iowa residents,” Ron grouched. “Saw a house she liked and offered the asking price.”

“We was just talking about the winters here in northern Iowa,” Clarence remarked. “It’s a whole lot different than southern California.”

“It’s no problem Ronald,” Gary said, “Just drive normal; you know, slow.”

“What about the summers?” Ron asked.

“Well, if we get the rain we need for the corn to grow, it’s hot and humid,” Gary said.

“Probably nothing like Alabama,” Clarence suggested.

“Wouldn’t know, Clarence,” Gary said, “Never been to Alabama. Doesn’t get as hot as Palmdale, but the humidity gets pretty high.”

“So let’s get back to the discussion about what’s going to happen now that the UN is gone,” Ron suggested. “What’s going to happen now?”

“There are infinite possibilities, Ronald, my friend,” Gary laughed. “I expect they’ll fill the empty seats in Congress and it will be business as usual.”

“So they’ll be right back on the kick to disarm America?” Ron asked.

“I wouldn’t go that far, partner,” Gary suggested. “The way the military passed out guns, ammo and munitions, they are going to play hell trying to disarm this country for a while.”

“Yeah, but do we want everyone armed to the teeth with automatic weapons and explosives?” Clarence asked.

“I consider that to be a multi-part question,” Gary said. “The crime rate ought to go way down. But, I expect that the military will be around picking up the AT-4’s, LAW’s, M203’s and 40mm grenades along with the mines and hand grenades. It’s a real shame we don’t have any of that stuff to turn in,”

“But, we’ve got...” Ron started to say.

“M1A rifles, M1911’s pistols and a few of those worthless M9’s,” Gary finished the sentence.

“I see,” Ron replied after a moment’s hesitation.

“I don’t,” Clarence said.

“What old Gar-Bear is saying is that he doesn’t trust the government to keep us safe and we ain’t going to turn in anything ‘cause we don’t have it in the first place,” Ron chuckled.

“There ya go,” Gary chuckled, too. “I do wish that they would do something about the Bill of Rights, though. The first amendment needs reworking and the second needs clarification.”

“What are the prisons like in Iowa?” Clarence asked, unconvinced.

“We’ll try to get cells together,” Ron laughed out loud.

Washington...

The new President was a Republican and served on the Armed Services Committee when he’d been in the House. He had been responsible for the military getting a jump up on the modernization plans. Those new weapons systems were great, but he didn’t want the military getting a big head and thinking that they ruled the US now that the UN had been kicked out. Obviously he didn’t understand the attitude of the Joint Chief’s.

“Mr. President,” the new Secretary of Defense started. “I brought along the Chairman of the Joint Chief’s as you requested.”

“General, what are the intentions of the military now that the UN is leaving?” the President asked.

“First off, Mr. President, we will be returning to our normal bases, forts, posts and ports,” the General said. “After that, we’ll be sending our people out and rounding up the heavy duty munitions that we passed out during the crisis. Once that is finished, we’ll be ready to resume our normal role in American Society.”

“Then you acknowledge that I am the Commander-in-Chief?” the President asked.

“That’s the way it’s always been Mr. President,” the Chairman replied.

“And what if I order you to pick up all of the weapons you folks gave to the population?” the President asked.

“We’d do it, of course, Mr. President, “But do you think that is wise? You’ve seen the benefits of having an armed population. They kept the UN forces off kilter and made our job a whole lot easier. I personally believe that it was what the founding fathers envisioned. But, we’ll do whatever you order.”

“You just go ahead with the plans you have General,” the President replied. “But, you do

understand that I had to ask.”

“Yes Sir,” the General replied. “Thank you, Sir.”

The Three Amigos In Iowa – Chapter 2 – Clean Up

Elections were held in short order and a temporary Congress was sworn in during January of 2012. Some states wouldn't change if they were nuked and they still elected liberals to Congress. But, for the most part, Congress was decidedly Republican. Most of the new members of Congress came from other walks of life and were not professional politicians. This made for an interesting Congress. In his State of the Union address, the President called for reforms of the first and second amendments, a no nonsense healthcare system that provided healthcare for everyone and a phasing out of the welfare system.

The military, for its part, did exactly as the Chairman of the Joint Chief's said it would, they returned to their installations and then spread out over the US attempting to recover the heavy duty munitions that they had passed out to the population. In general terms, they were successful, although it seemed that the public had used a lot more of those weapons than they had ever imagined possible. The instructions from on high were very explicit, the Constitution guarantees against unlawful search and seizure of property were paramount and the military was expected to respect those constraints.

"So, we ended up keeping everything we had?" Ron asked.

"Nah, we turned in the AT-4's and some of those landmines," Gary replied.

"What about the other weapons?" Clarence asked.

"Told them that we just left the German and Pakistani weapons lay," Gary explained.

"They buy that?" Clarence asked.

"Probably not, but who cares?" Gary chuckled. "We've got rights again for the first time in a long time. Back in 2004, my friend Fleataxi wrote a story called 'UN Day 24 Oct 2009'. I liked the way he ended his story. Let me quote part of it for you."

The states re-wrote whole sections of the Constitution, moving the 10th Amendment to the top of the pile, and re-writing the 2nd to make it clear that the right to keep and bear arms was an absolute right, and any law to restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens was null and void, and any official who attempted to deny those rights to any citizen would be guilty of a Class A Felony, subject to the death penalty. All Concealed Weapon laws were stricken from the books, since they restricted the rights of citizens to bear arms as they saw fit. The First Amendment was re-written to protect all religious speech, and anti-government speech. The Media no longer had a free pass to print or publish anything they wanted, and the FCC reigned in Hollywood, by telling them that if they released anything they weren't happy with, they'd fine them 100% of the money they made on the objectionable movie. The US was going back to the old 'Community Standard' for vulgarity. All previous laws and Supreme Court rulings were declared Null and Void.

The Congress was limited to 1 term, and the pay was set the same as the lowest-paid school teacher in their home state. All Federal Agencies were disbanded, and reorganized. The states realized that they needed a small Federal police force to investigate interstate crime, and a small intelligence agency to keep an eye on other countries. All non-resident aliens were ordered deported, including everyone on a visitor or student visa, or anyone who couldn't prove a legal right to be in the US. All foreign embassies were closed pending re-organization of the State Department, and the diplomats and their staffs were ordered out. The final decision of the 2nd Constitutional Congress was to have a President and Vice President, mostly for ceremonial purposes. All military decisions were delegated to the Joint Chiefs, who reported to a 50-member committee cleared for National Security information, and appointed by the Governors each state. Their only job was the defense of the United States, and working out the reduction of the army from the World's policemen to a purely defensive Military. The US would still keep our nuclear warheads as the ultimate Defense, but we stopped getting involved in every little civil war. We made it clear to every country in the world that we were through fixing their problems, the bank was closed, and if you attacked us or caused problems, you could guarantee a lethal response.

“He went too far,” Ron said.

“Maybe,” Gary conceded, “But I like his ideas. We apparently aren't going to have a 2nd Constitutional Congress, but I half expect that the Congress will respond to the President's State of the Union address and clean up the Bill of Rights. There will be a new Supreme Court since most of the Justices died. You can expect that Court to be pretty Conservative and probably strict constructionists. It will take time, but they will reverse the bad decisions made by the liberal Court.”

“What about the part where the US will no longer be the World's policeman or the source of funds for every third world county?” Clarence asked.

“That's pretty much up to the President and Congress,” Gary suggested, “But I have a sneaking feeling that we will be spending our money at home on things like a healthcare system. I also expect that there's going to be a new round of trust busting and the drug companies are going to start selling medicines at a reasonable profit instead of gouging the public.”

“So, it will be business as usual,” Ron replied, dejected.

“Not hardly, Ron,” Gary smiled. “There's a whole lot of the public that has seen what happens when the central government gets too much power. We need a central government to establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common Defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity. What we don't need is a bunch of politicians telling us what's good for us. What the hell difference does it make if I use a 5-round magazine or a 20-round

magazine in a rifle to hunt deer?”

“What about the news media?” Clarence asked.

“Clarence, I never saw anything like it back in 2004,” Gary said. “You could tell the politics of the media just by half paying attention to what they reported. Let me give you an example. CNN reported those missing 380 tons of high explosives like it was the October surprise. CBS had intended to spring the story the night before the election, so the President couldn’t respond. That commie NY Times leaked the story early in a half ass fashion, ruining CBS’s plans. FOX had the straight story; NBC had embedded reporters as did FOX. Apparently, Saddam moved the explosives before the US invasion, but we’ll probably never know for sure. Some FOX reporter who was in Moscow when the story broke said he walked the entire complex and didn’t see any of those seals on any of the bunkers. Who knows what the truth is? Who cares?”

“The main point,” Gary continued, “Is that ill-advised or not, we were in the Iraq war. Bush was doing his best to establish a democracy in Iraq. That was one of the few things that I ever agreed with a Kennedy about, the US can’t export Democracy.”

“Teddy said that?” Clarence asked.

“Oh hell no,” Gary laughed, “That was Bobby, I think. Teddy was a real piece of work, I’ll tell you that.”

When the 13 colonies were still part of England, Professor Alexander Tyler wrote about the fall of the Athenian Republic over 2,000 years previously:

A Democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of Government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the public treasure. From that moment on the majority always vote for the candidates promising the most money from the public treasury, with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy followed by dictatorship.

The average age of the worlds’ greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through the following sequence: from bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to great courage, from great courage to liberty, from liberty to abundance, from abundance to selfishness, from selfishness to complacency, from complacency to apathy, from apathy to dependency, from dependency back to bondage.

“Bobby’s kid gave an interesting speech back in 2004,” Gary said. “He was talking about the environment. I didn’t agree with everything he said, but he did have a few good points.”

“I can’t tell if you are a liberal or conservative, at times,” Ron said.

"It's ok Ron, I don't know myself," Gary laughed. "I mostly subscribe to the US Freedom Fighters Doctrine."

"Can you summarize that doctrine for me," Clarence asked.

"Yep. I pledge my life to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America," Gar said.

"You sound like some kind of a Patriot," Ron concluded.

"Fleataxi said to kill them all and let God sort them out," Gary grinned. "I think he was talking about the ragheads, but you never know."

"At least we don't have to build a shelter and a hidden gunroom," Ron commented. "With all of that free time on our hands, what are we going to do?"

"I don't know about the two of you, but I'm going to take a rifle to the range and practice," Gary replied. "I don't see how I can solve FOX News's problem the way it is, I can barely see 600-yards."

"I'll join you," Ron said, "Maybe I'll get a chance at Geraldo myself."

"Is that all you two think about is killing some dang reporter who isn't worth the price of a bullet?" Clarence asked.

"Everyone needs a goal, Clarence," Gary chuckled. "Come on and shoot with us. Who knows maybe Geraldo will pop up in your sights one of these days."

"I couldn't shoot him," Clarence protested. "He's half Puerto Rican and half Jewish. He gives a whole new meaning to the term minority."

"You don't understand Clarence," Ron said, "Gar-Bear hates him because he's a lawyer and a reporter. It has nothing to do with his ethnic heritage."

"Good, I never suspect Gary of being that way and I glad to know I was right," Clarence smiled.

"So, are you coming to the range?" Gary asked.

"Why not?" Clarence replied.

"Before we go to the range, I have a present for you," Gary said.

Gary went to a gun case and removed a Super Match M1A, replete with the Leupold Mk IV variable power scope, Surefire suppressor and Harris bipod.

“Sorry partner,” Gary said, “But when you showed up, I was so glad to see you that I completely forgot that I had that rifle for you.”

“You were just hoping he got shot so you wouldn’t have to give it to him,” Ron suggested.

“That’s a terrible thing to say, butthead,” Gary scolded. “Clarence and I are tight, right Clarence?”

“For a minute there I thought you was going to call me bro,” Clarence laughed. “Yeah, we be tight, Gary.”

“I may feel that way, partner, but I’d never say it,” Gary grinned. “It gets used too much by people who aren’t really your friends. Go get your gun butthead and join Clarence and me on the range.”

“What are we going to use for targets, Gar-Bear?” Ron asked.

“You volunteering?” Gary came back.

“Yeah, right,” Ron replied. “I meant bullseyes or silhouettes?”

“Better use Bull’s,” Gary suggested, “Clarence will want those to get that new rifle sighted in. Grab a handful of C-1’s”. (A C-1 is a 36" x 42" target with a 23⁵/₈" Black bullseye used for 300 Meter International High Power Rifle.)

Wow! It appeared that Gary was going to start Clarence at 300-yards. On the other hand, maybe he’d start him at 100-yards with that great big bull you could almost hit with your eyes closed. The main thing was to get the rifle sighted in and give Clarence a feeling of confidence. Confidence was as important to accurate shooting as was breathing and match grade ammunition. Of course they could teach breathing and there was plenty of match ammunition, but confidence only came from success. So what if he was shooting a 300-meter bullseye at 100- yards? If he could keep them all in the black at 100-yards, or even 100-meters, that was almost as good as shooting at silhouettes. The difference between 100-yards and 100-meters is about 28 feet, if I did the math right.

What they really need was some life-sized photos of Geraldo that they could put at 600-yards so Gary could really practice. Say, you don’t suppose that Geraldo sells life-sized photos of himself, do you? It would be worth the money at any reasonable price. Probably not, but it would be a good way for him to make money for his funeral expenses. Oh, Well.

The Three Amigos In Iowa – Chapter 3 – Seeing the Sites

“You could turn into a halfway decent shooter for a man your age,” Ron complimented Clarence.

“Thanks Ron, but with a rifle like that, it was hard not to keep them in the black,” Clarence acknowledged.

Looks to me like you can take out anyone you come up against with that rifle out to 300-meters,” Gary agreed. “Next time we’ll switch to the other target and simulate a 600-meter range with a smaller bullseye.”

“Shooting a rifle-scope-ammo match up seems to help,” Ron added.

“Ron, you surprise me,” Gary said, “A minute of angle is awfully good for someone our age.”

“Wasn’t quite a minute of angle,” Ron admitted, “But I was just having a good day.”

“We’ll have to get out and see the sights,” Gary suggested.

“I’ve seen corn before,” Ron kidded.

“Really, Ron,” Gary said. “First we’ll go to Spillville to see the town. It’s sort of a miniature Solvang, with a clock museum and an Antonin Dvorak exhibit. Then, we’ll go on over to the Mississippi River so you can see Iowa’s mountains.”

“Do I get to wear a 5-point harness?” Clarence asked.

“No, for you, we’ll use an 8 point harness,” Gary laughed. “That’s a 6-point harness with a head restraint and a noose around your neck. It won’t be the crash that kills you.”

“What else is there to see in Iowa?” Ron asked.

“Ron I could spend a week telling you about all of the sightseeing,” Gary said. “This is an old state with a lot of interesting things, probably about like every other state. For example, if you want a real Hudson Bay Blanket, we’ll go to the Amana Colonies, but bring your checkbook, they ain’t cheap. First offered for trade in 1670, Hudson’s Bay Point Blankets were so highly prized by Native Americans that they became important articles of trade in American history. Each short line or ‘point’ woven into the edge of the blanket indicated the number of beaver pelts to be exchanged. Today, points are still woven into the blanket as an historical reference and to indicate the size of the blanket. In the late 1700’s, wool blankets were a necessity to comfort and survival.”

“So we’re going to go lollygagging around Iowa for the next few years?” Ron asked.

"We could, but I've seen most of those places, so we only have to go see places that interest you two," Gary suggested. "But I do want to get to Spillville, they've got a Wisconsin cheese with peppers in it that you wouldn't believe and I want a 4-point Hudson Bay Blanket."

Washington...

"The last of the UN is gone," the president said, "Why do you want such a large Defense appropriation?"

"Mr. President," the SecDef said, "We need to replace the Raptors that were shot down and they're over a ¼ billion each. Having a fleet of 20 B-2 bombers won't let us project our power everywhere we need to, either. Anyway, you know how much all of this fancy new equipment costs, you voted to get it funded in the first place."

"I thought we were going to go to the Joint Strike Fighter," the President said.

"We are building those too, Mr. President, the F-22 and F-35 are partners," The SecDef reminded the President. "However, some of the countries that were originally included in the JSF purchase program were part of that UN bunch. Do you really want them to have the F-35?"

"That wouldn't seem to be appropriate," the President agreed.

"One thing that nobody considers, Mr. President, is that in terms of percentage of the GNP, our defense spending keeps shrinking despite the apparent growth in total dollars," the SecDef pointed out.

"So, what can you live with?" the President asked. "I'm going to play hell getting this through Congress, even a Republican Congress."

"Well, we want to increase the B-2 fleet to original 132 aircraft, increase the F-22 fleet to the original 648 aircraft and build all 2,852 JSF's," the SecDef replied.

"The people in Hell want ice water, Mr. Secretary," the President replied, "Can't you be a little more realistic?"

"I am being realistic, Mr. President," the SecDef insisted. "The Navy wants a 600-ship fleet too. I haven't even brought that up yet."

"What's the point to all of this armament?" the President asked. "The cold war is over and we kicked the UN's butt."

"Russia and China didn't get involved in that UN debacle, Mr. President," the SecDef

said. "The Russian economy is very healthy and they're spending 20% of their GNP on defense projects. The Chinese are so secretive that despite having an intelligence Czar, we don't have any idea what they're doing. Besides, there are Iran and North Korea to consider. Both countries now possess intercontinental ballistic missile capacity and nuclear warheads. The US is only spending 3% of its GNP on defense, maybe less. I'm all in favor of your policy of isolationism, but we have to keep the wolves at bay. I don't think that a trillion dollars a year for the next few years is too much to spend to make that happen."

"I thought the Middle East was wiped out."

"It was, excluding Israel and Iran."

The SecDef had the President there, but, 'trillions' a year for the next few years? Well, the Army wasn't issuing \$600 rifles any more, were they? (Nope, they cost more.) It was ok; CBS and CNN had to have something to criticize his administration over. Then again, 2012 was an election year, so this ought to prove interesting. The key was to stall until mid-November, then to dump it on Congress. With the mood of the country, he could probably pull it off, even with the new healthcare initiative. He figured he could use the 'millions for defense, but not one penny for tribute' argument. It might fly, but he wondered.

Iowa...

"This M416 is a pretty thing," Ron observed.

"It's still a stinking 5.56," Gary grouched. "Must not be much good if the Army is passing them out."

"Who are you going to vote for in November?" Clarence asked.

"I think that I'll go with the incumbent," Gary said. "I voted for Ford, for all the good that did. This guy seems to have his act together. It will be nice having healthcare that means something."

"You just wait until the election is over," Ron said, "I'll bet YOU a grand that he has a November surprise!"

"I can't bet, Ronald," Gary said. "I agree that he's probably holding off announcing an increase in defense spending until after the election."

"How did you know that?" Ron asked.

"It stands to reason that if the US is going to return to the policy of isolationism that existed between WW I and WW II that we'll have to build up our military," Gary explained.

“We don’t want any more surprise attacks like Pearl Harbor.”

“I thought that I was the only person who figured that out,” Ron said.

“Gary and I were talking about that earlier, Ron,” Clarence said, “Are you sure you didn’t overhear us?”

“I was in Floyd looking at the new house,” Ron alibied.

“Oh, how did you like the house?” Gary asked.

“Well, it is big and it is old,” Ron said.

“Sounds like it sort of suits you,” Gary laughed. “You’re big (around) and old, too. I need to change the subject. Are you familiar with the Akula class Russian submarine?”

“Always confused me, Gar-Bear,” Ron replied. “I could never figure out if it was the ballistic missile sub the Russians built or a fast attack sub.”

“The 971-B is the Akula fast attack sub, Ron, and the 941 class is the Typhoon class that the Russian call Akula,” Gary explained. “NATO called the 971 the Akula and the 941 the Typhoon, but the Russian called the 971 the Shchuka-B and the 945 the Akula. Anyway, the 971 boats can launch up to 12 cruise missiles and the 945 10 ICBMs.”

“But the Russian navy is history,” Clarence observed.

“As of the end of 2003, the Russians had 9 active 971’s,” Gary said. “I’ve never seen anything on the net about them retiring them either. They were going to lease some to India, but that fell through. The Akula (971) is the quietest submarine there is period. What do you think 9 dozen nuclear cruise missiles would do to this country?”

“Raise hell, that’s for sure,” Ron said. “But we have SOSUS and can track them, right?”

“Nope, SOSUS can’t track the Akula FA boats and neither can the 688I class subs,” Gary said, “Provided they stay at normal operating speeds. I guess that’s why they’ve shut down all but 3 SOSUS listening stations.”

“So what you’re telling me is that the Russian could sneak up to our coasts and launch a whole bunch of nuclear cruise missiles?” Ron said, “Do I have that right?”

“Can’t do no such thing Ron,” Clarence insisted.

“Sorry, Clarence, Ron’s right,” Gary said.

But we’re allies,” Clarence said, “Russia is part of NATO.”

“Not exactly,” Gary explained. “The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was established in May 2002 as the main forum for advancing NATO-Russia relations, in which the 26 Allies and Russia work together as equal partners to identify and pursue opportunities for joint action. That isn’t the same.”

“They stayed out of the UN Peacekeeping operation,” Clarence insisted.

“Yes, they did, Clarence, but why?” Gary retorted. “I don’t trust any dang commies!”

“Gary nobody stands a chance against the US,” Ron added. “We have 10 Nimitz class carriers and 2 of the CVN-21 class carriers under construction. That’s not counting the carriers scheduled for retirement.”

“Yeah, nobody stands a chance against the US,” Clarence parroted.

“The UN tried to take us out,” Gary pointed out.

“And failed,” Clarence retorted.

“Only because they didn’t wipe us out, Clarence,” Gary replied. “What is the fly time on one of those nuclear cruise missiles the Russians have? They’re the Granat, which can have a nuclear warhead. The missile is 8.09m long, 0.77m in diameter, weighs 1,700 kg, and has a range of 3,000 km. It is launched from 533 mm torpedo tubes and can be launched from a submerged submarine. The P-700 Granat [SSN-19 Shipwreck] can carry a 500kt nuke.”

“So, they launch ‘em and we blow the subs out of the water and retaliate,” Ron said, “Simple as 1-2-3.”

“Just because a missile can go 3,000km doesn’t mean they have to send them that far, Ronald,” Gary said quietly. “We might not have time to locate the subs or to retaliate before they take down our Command and Control system. And, unless we know for certain who launched the missiles, who are we going to retaliate against?”

“Oh,” Ron said.

“Nuke ‘em all and let God sort ‘em out,” Clarence suggested.

“Have you ever met Fleataxi, Clarence?” Gary chuckled. “When you do meet him, be sure you’re wearing your 8-point harness. You two guys ought to get along fine.”

“What you mean by that?” Clarence asked.

“Well you can hit the target at 300-meters and he has characters in his stories who can

dot an "I" at 3 miles or something like that with a 25mm gun." Gary said. "And Ronald, he named one of his characters after you, partner."

"I thought you and that Fleataxi was pals," Ron said.

"We are, partner, I just like giving him a hard time."

The Three Amigos In Iowa – Chapter 4 – Dirty Hands

So Russia stayed out of the UN debacle, did that mean that their hands were clean? While the UN wasted its assets in the US, Russia had a bit of an arms race of its own. They weren't getting along well with Beijing, or so some sources reported. Beijing was also building up their forces in case Russia attacked them. North Korea was also building more of their long-range ICBMs. Japan complained in the reconstituted UN when the North Koreans flew a bird over Japan in yet another test flight. After the destruction of the UN Building in NYC, the UN had moved to Brussels and was occupying available space while a new building was constructed.

Congress, on its own, began to discuss increasing the military and the President decided not to wait until after the election to present the increased Defense Budget. Not surprisingly, that opened a tremendous debate in both the House and the Senate. Neither chamber particularly disagreed with the proposed sharp increase in defense spending, but a lot of members were working overtime to get their share of the appropriations for their home states. The majority, being junior members and not professional politicians, were nevertheless aware of how much having a piece of the pie would mean to their home states. But with a trillion dollars a year for several years, there was enough to go around. Thus, before the fall elections, both houses of Congress had approved a special Defense spending package of 1 trillion dollars per year for the next 8 years, lasting until 2020.

The fall campaigns during 2012 took on a new character with all of the Republican candidates emphasizing how they were making America safe and the Democrat candidates emphasizing the new Healthcare package. Everyone knew that the Healthcare package was Republican sponsored, as was the defense buildup and the Democrats only carried a few states. The Senate had all but rubber stamped a new, very conservative, Supreme Court, by the way. On the new court, someone like Robert Bork would be considered a liberal. It was a shame that FDR wasn't alive to see the Supreme Court actually get packed.

All Three of The Amigos were now shooting pretty well at those 600/300-yard targets for old men. Having 20 power variable scopes didn't hurt, by any measure. They found themselves longing to own the Barrett rifles or McMillan Tac-50s. Barrett had several new generations now, so the rifles had slipped a little in price. Not surprisingly, Smith was back in business in Des Moines and he arranged for them to acquire fully equipped .50 caliber rifles with suppressors. Ron went with the M82A1M while Gary and Clarence went with the bolt action Tac-50. All rifles sported Jet suppressors from Mike's down in Texas. The three decided on two types of ammo, Hornady 750gr A-MAX Match and Mk 211MP.

The Mk 211MP was very difficult to acquire. Ralph never told them where he had come up with 30 of the 120 round ammo cans. He said he could get more, if they needed it, but they had to give him some lead time.

Unlike Gerald Ford, the new President hadn't taken office as a result of a scandal in his own party and he was elected to office for his first full term. Because he had served as President for less than 2 years, the man was eligible to be elected for 2 full terms, making him potentially the longest serving President since FDR. Now, if you were conservative by nature, everything in Washington was hunky-dory. If you were a liberal, the sun never seemed to shine. Still, there was a National Healthcare Plan and people were receiving decent healthcare for the first time in a long time.

Say, when you studied Economics did they teach you that you could have guns or butter but not both? Don't you believe it; you can have both, and you just get a big deficit. The Republicans developed a very good Healthcare system and it eliminated the need for Medicare and state programs like MediCal. There was an offset in costs and when the Congress threatened to pass legislation to impose price caps on drug prices, the drug companies fell into line. Doesn't sound like a Republican Congress? What can I say? These people weren't professional politicians and they had watched everyone and his/her brother screwing around with healthcare for a very long time with no results. They also passed caps on litigation and proposed to withhold state highway funds if the states didn't do likewise. One other thing that they did was to eliminate all farm subsidies. What is the most heavily subsidized crop in America? Would you believe Rice?

It was a very interesting state of affairs in 2013 when the new President, Congress and Supreme Court began to direct the affairs of the country. And, the US had a new, firmly entrenched policy of isolationism. Much to the chagrin of people like old Gar-Bear, there was no more talk of colonies on the Moon or on Mars. No one had come up with a good alternative for the space shuttle. The only rockets lifting off were to replace aging communications, GPS satellites and servicing the ISS.

The new Congress, still mostly non-professionals, decided that it was time for America to reduce its dependence on hydrocarbon-based fuels. Coal was hydrocarbon based, but we had lots of it and it was clean, so they continued to use it while creating massive incentives for geothermal, solar and wind generated electricity. One of the principal problems with coal was the amount of sulfur it contained, which in turn led to acid rain. New federal guidelines virtually eliminated high sulfur coal usage. Improved boiler designs also insured far more complete combustion of the coal.

Unfortunately for the Americans, worldwide weather patterns had not been the best and in parts of the world, more people than ever were starving. China had a major crop failure and the winter of 2012-2013 had seen the Chinese begin planning an expansionist movement to secure food for their people. The winter of 2012-2013 was summer in the southern hemisphere and Africa fared poorly too. Some things, apparently, never change. Russia was eyeing the Chinese and as long as they expanded southward, they would leave the Chinese alone.

Anyone remember a place called French Indochina? Today they call it Cambodia, Laos

and Vietnam. There are also Burma, Thailand and Kuala Lumpur in the area as I recall. To the north of China lay Mongolia with its oil, coal, copper, molybdenum, tungsten, phosphates, tin, nickel, zinc, fluorspar, gold, silver, and iron.

According to the 2004 CIA Factbook, China was “involved in complex dispute with Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and possibly Brunei over the Spratly Islands; the 2002 *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* has eased tensions but falls short of a legally binding *code of conduct* desired by several of the disputants; most of the rugged, militarized boundary with India is in dispute, but the two sides are committed to begin resolution with discussions on the least disputed Middle Sector; Kashmir remains the world's largest and highly militarized territorial dispute with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir) and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas), but recent discussion and confidence-building measures among parties are beginning to defuse tensions, India does not recognize Pakistan's ceding lands to China in a 1964 boundary agreement.”

In 2003 China together with Taiwan asserted their claims to the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu Tai) with increased media coverage and protest actions; China and Kazakhstan have resolved their border dispute and are working to demarcate their large open borders to control population migration, illegal activities, and trade; certain islands in Yalu and Tumen rivers are in an uncontested dispute with North Korea and a section of boundary around Mount Paektu is indefinite – China has been attempting to stem mass illegal migration of North Koreans escaping famine and oppression into northern China.

China continues to seek a mutually acceptable solution to the disputed alluvial islands with Russia at the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri rivers and a small island on the Argun river as part of the 2001 *Treaty of Good Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation*; boundary delimitation agreements signed in 2002 with Tajikistan cedes 1,000 sq km of Pamir Mountain range to China in return for China's relinquishing claims to 28,000 sq km, but demarcation has not commenced; demarcation of land boundary with Vietnam continues but maritime boundary and joint fishing zone agreement remains unratified; China occupies Paracel Islands also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan; groups in Burma and Thailand express concern over China's construction of 13 hydroelectric dams on the Salween River in Yunnan Province.”

A treaty is just a piece of paper – always remember that. By 2013, Taiwan was a part of China and China had abrogated all of its Treaties and was moving south to secure food to feed its population, now roughly 1.4 billion. With its new isolationist policy, the US wasn't about to get involved in another *Vietnam*. Russia was watching for any sign of movement by the Chinese to the north, into Mongolia. China and North Korea had resolved their differences and were now fast friends with the illegal immigration policy solved. To paraphrase a line from *Top Gun*, *tensions were high*. Speaking of which, there is no such thing as a MiG-28.

Washington...

"The Chinese appear to be massing for an invasion of the countries to their south, Mr. President, what are your intentions?" the SecDef asked.

"We aren't in the position to interfere, Mr. Secretary," the President responded. "All of this comes too soon on the heels of the UN invasion."

"But Mr. President, we have Treaties with most of those countries," the SecDef insisted.

"Trade Agreements, not Mutual Defense Treaties," the President reminded the SecDef. "If we try to project our power into Southeast Asia at this particular moment in history, it would end up worse than Vietnam. We should be far enough with our military buildup by the time those two new carriers are finished that we might have to consider getting involved. But, for the moment, we are not going to and that is final."

Iowa...

"CNN seems to think that China might be getting ready to move into Southeast Asia," Gary reported.

"Are you still watching that leftist excuse for a news organization?" Ron asked.

"Sure, Ronald," Gary said, "I almost like Aaron Brown. Besides, FOX has Geraldo. And, another thing, if the US ever has a second American Revolution, it will be the commie, abortionist, liberals against the Moral Majority."

"Don't hold back now, Gar-Bear," Ron laughed, "Tell us how you really feel about things."

"They're both wrong," Gary claimed. "Anyway, I was talking about China. I wonder if the Administration is going to get us involved in Southeast Asia again?"

"I still say we should nuke 'em all and let God sort 'em out," Clarence opined.

"We may end up doing that yet, Clarence," Gary acknowledged, "But I wouldn't be in a rush to start using nukes."

After George W. Bush's tough talk about the 'axis of evil' unnerved allies – and forced the Administration to dispense assurances it was not about to go halfcocked after Iran, Iraq and North Korea – the White House has once again supplied the international community reason for the jitters, thanks to its new Nuclear Posture Review. The classified report, first revealed by The Los Angeles Times and then front-paged by The New York Times, is the Pentagon's master plan for developing and deploying nuclear weapons.

The document, which lists contingencies in which nuclear arms might be used, notes that the United States might have to resort to nuclear weapons during 'an Iraqi attack on Israel, or its neighbors, or a North Korean attack on South Korea or a military confrontation over the status of Taiwan.' (The latter, of course, would be a confrontation with China.) The report also states, 'Iran, Syria and Libya are among the countries that could be involved in immediate, potential or unexpected contingencies' that would require 'nuclear strike capabilities,' and it states that the United States could launch a nuclear assault to destroy stocks of weapons of mass destruction, such as biological and chemical arms.

So what if China and Russia ended up in a war? And, if North Korea got involved, who cared? The US absolutely, positively wasn't going to get involved, right? Right, we had planes to build, ships to commission and we were pouting at the way the rest of the world treated us and we weren't going to get involved in any world politics that didn't involve England, Australia or Israel, our good buddies and allies. That's what the President said, and Presidents never lie. The last honest politician to be President was Jimmy Carter who admitted to lusting after some woman in his heart. The term honest politician is an oxymoron, right?

Wait, did I mention Australia? Naw, a missile couldn't go that far off course, Australia must be 1,200 miles or more from Kuala Lumpur. And, who would want to nuke Singapore anyway? Singapore isn't even on the peninsula anyway; it's an island. So, if someone were to land an ICBM in Australia, they couldn't very well claim that the target was Singapore. And, Australia isn't a nuclear power. But, Great Britain is, isn't it? And if someone nuked Australia, what would the British do? A referendum to change Australia's status, from a commonwealth headed by the British monarch to a republic, was defeated in 1999.

Chief of state: Queen of Australia Elizabeth II (since 6 February 1952), represented by Governor General Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Michael Jeffery (since 11 August 2003); Head of government: Prime Minister John Winston Howard (since 11 March 1996); Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson (since 20 July 1999); Cabinet: Parliament nominates and selects, from among its members, a list of candidates to serve as government ministers; from this list, the governor general swears in the final selections for the Cabinet; Elections: none; the monarch is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch on the recommendation of the prime minister; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or leader of a majority coalition is sworn in as prime minister by the governor general. Australia is part of the United Kingdom, and as such indirectly a nuclear power. So, if someone were to nuke Australia, the Kingdom could retaliate with nuclear weapons. And who is America's greatest ally? Not the UK per chance?

The Three Amigos In Iowa – Chapter 5 – The Incident

“I have to quit writing these patriot fiction stories,” Gary told Ron.

“Why, partner?” Ron asked.

“Well, I spent several hours on the net researching stuff for a story and when I reported what I’d read, someone called me a liar,” Gary explained. “Then, I got po’d and had to spend another 2 hours finding the exact quote. But, I sent it to him. Everybody’s a frig-ging expert even if you quote a source exactly.”

“Is he always like this?” Clarence asked.

“Not all of the time, no,” Ron chuckled. “He off ranting and raving about the Akula submarines again. The Russians call the Typhoon class the Akula class and the Akula class the 971B class, so sometimes people get confused. Hell, he had it wrong for a long time, but he finally figured out what the mystery was. Tom Clancy said, don’t quote me on this, that the Akula fast attack submarine could go 50 knots. Hell, Gary believed that for years. Turns out they only go 35 knots, so I don’t see what the big deal is. And depending upon the source you review, the Akula fast attack submarine is either equipped with Granat [SSN-19 Shipwreck] or Granat [SSN-21 Sampson] missiles. The Sampson is the sea version of the Granat Kh-55. The P-700 3M-45 Granat is also known as the SSN-19 SHIPWRECK. Confused yet?”

“Why is it important?” Clarence asked.

“Because the Sampson can only carry a 200kt nuke and a Shipwreck can carry a 500kt nuke,” Ron explained.

“Well, Ron,” Clarence laughed, “If either one of them goes off over our houses, we’ll be dead either way.”

“Tell Gar-Bear that it doesn’t make any difference, but warn me first,” Ron chuckled.

“How many mph is 35 knots?” Clarence asked.

“Multiply by 1.189,” Ron said, “That would be 41.6mph.

“Say it went 50 mph,” Clarence suggested, “How many knots is that?”

“Multiply by 0.869,” Ron said, “That would be 43.5 knots.”

“How did you know that?” Clarence asked.

“Gary looked it up on the web,” Ron chuckled, “But then he had to do some calculations,

so I don't know if he's right or not."

"Is that knot or not?" Clarence asked.

"I'm not sure, partner, who's on first?" Ron asked.

"You're right," Clarence said.

[Actually, the Alfa is the fastest submarine. It has a test depth of 350 meters. The Akula fast attack submarine had a maximum operating depth of 600 meters, 1,968'.]

Situation Room, White House, Washington, DC...

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Chairman said. At 1400zulu, an Australian ANZAC class frigate made contact with submerged contact. They eventually forced the contact to surface and it turned out to be a Chinese type 93 class nuclear submarine. It was approximately 40 miles off the Australian coast. Australia has gone on full alert. Approximately 4 hours earlier, elements of the People's Liberation Army invaded Burma, Laos and Vietnam. It is estimated that the Type 93 SSN is equipped with wire- and wave-homing torpedoes, submarine-launched anti-ship cruise missiles and mines. It is also be capable of firing anti-submarine warfare (ASW) missiles and land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs). The displacement of the boat is estimated to be between 6,500 and 7,000 tons, with a pressured water nuclear reactor and a single asymmetrical seven-blade skewed propeller.

As a result of those actions, the governments of India and Pakistan put their militaries on full alert. Russia and the Russia went to a heightened alert status, too. We raised our alert status to DEFCON 4 and the DHS Threat Level to yellow.

"So much for a posture of isolationism," the President observed, "What is the Navy doing?"

"The Armed Forces have cancelled all leaves and ordered everyone to report to their duty stations, Mr. President," the Chairman explained. "We are provisioning our carrier strike groups and making ready to set sail if ordered to do so. Our greatest concern is the type 94 Chinese boats. Each of the Type 94 SSBNs mounts 16 JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with a maximum range of 8,000kms. When deployed, this missile will allow Chinese SSBNs to target portions of the United States for the first time from operating areas located near the Chinese coast. Equipped with the JL-2 missiles, the Type 94 SSBNs would only have to patrol just to the northeast of the Kuril Islands to hold about three-fourths of the United States within its missile's range."

"You'd better sortie all of our attack boats and get all of the Ohio class SSBN's and SSGN's out of port and on station," the President ordered. "Sortie the first 4 carrier task groups that are ready to sail to Australia. We might as well try and get ahead of the

UK's inevitable request. Be prepared to change our military posture to DEFCON 3. I'll get on the horn to the Russian Premier and inform him that all of our actions are in response to the Chinese activities. The State Department will contact all of the countries involved and inform them of our actions."

"What about the Chinese boats?" the Chairman asked.

"If your skippers hear any of the type 94's preparing to launch, sink them," the President ordered. "If any of the type 93 boats take a provocative action, sink them too. I want the Air Force to retarget our ICBM's for complete coverage of China. Do the same with the Ohio class boats. At the first sign of launch of any weapons against this country, you will reduce China to ashes."

"We'd better go ahead with DEFCON 3 immediately, Mr. President," the Chairman urged.

"Do it," the President ordered. "I've got the hard part here. I have to go on TV and notify the American public. I don't expect they'll be too happy being we're still digging out from the UN invasion."

Negotiations between the US and the UK on an amendment to extend the 1958 US-UK Mutual Defense Agreement are now complete. The amendment would renew this Cold War nuclear cooperation pact, and is being pushed through in haste, despite increasing controversy concerning the legality of this Agreement.

The Amendment was approved, authorized for execution, and transmitted to Congress by President Bush on June 14, 2004. The text of the Amendment itself is not publicly available at time of writing, but in his 'Message to Congress', President Bush stated that it, "extends for 10 years (until December 31, 2014) provisions that permit the transfer of nonnuclear parts, source, byproduct, special nuclear materials, and other material and technology for nuclear weapons and military reactors, and revises text, principally in the Security Annex, to be consistent with current policies and practices relating to personnel and physical security."

I guess you can see why the US was so rapid to react to that Chinese boat in Australian waters. Once the most powerful Navy in the world, the UK was reduced to a paltry fleet. They couldn't really do all that much to protect Australia and had invoked the Treaty immediately. The President was caught between the proverbial rock and hard place. Little wonder he reacted the way he did in the Situation room briefing. The British Prime Minister called before the briefing was over and the President reassured him that the US was taking immediate action.

Back in Iowa...

"I just heard that they ordered all Guard units to active service," Ron said, "I wonder

what that is all about?”

“CNN announced that the President will be addressing the country at 8pm,” Gary said, “Maybe we’ll find out then.”

“I don’t like the sounds of this one bit,” Clarence muttered.

“The cave is fully stocked in case we’re force to hang out there again,” Ralph announced.

“Good, Ralph,” Gary said, “But I have a feeling that if we end up in the cave this time, we’ll be hiding from radiation. You don’t have any radiation filters on that cave do you?”

“I ordered some from that outfit in Utah,” Ralph said. “They sent me an email confirming shipment yesterday. That would have about broken the bank, I’ll tell you, but the Town Fathers voted to pay for the equipment and installation. The equipment should be here in a day or so. We’re putting in block walls and steel doors to seal up the cave. I don’t really think that we’ll need any blast doors, however.”

“Why did you order that equipment Ralph?” Clarence asked. “It didn’t appear that this country was in for any more trouble.”

“I’m a little like TOM, I guess,” Ralph said, “I figure that anything than can happen will, eventually.”

“Clarence and I just moved into our new homes,” Ron reported, “We haven’t had a change to do anything in the way of preparedness.”

“Ron, you boys are armed to the teeth,” Ralph laughed. “That’s why we have a Municipal Shelter for the town of Floyd. About all you need to buy are ammo and maybe some extra flashlight batteries.”

“Don’t need any ammo, Ralph,” Ron said, “We’ve got a ton of it.”

“Maybe you should move some of it to the armory in the cave,” Ralph suggested.

“When TSHTF,” Ron said.

“Why wait Ron?” Ralph asked. “When TSHTF, you won’t have time to load it all up and move it.”

“Clarence, you want to help me move the stuff?” Ron asked.

“Why don’t we get some of the younger folks to do that Ron?” Clarence suggested. “I’m getting too old for this stuff.”

“I’ll get Damon and Derek to move the stuff,” Gary suggested, “We’d better head to Charles City and stock up on batteries.”

They did, too. They cleaned out K-Mart and bought not only regular batteries, but also rechargeable batteries and several of the solar powered battery chargers. Damon and Derek moved all of the men’s ammo and weapons, except for 2 ALICE rigs and weapons to the cave’s armory. Ralph was on the phone to Walton Feed after a quick conversation with the Floyd Town Council. He ordered enough food for 400 people for 6 weeks to add to their mountain of supplies already stored in the cave. And, all of this took place before they heard what the President had to say to the nation. Whenever a President held one of these short notice announcements, the news was never good.

My Fellow Americans, the President began.

The United States has observed with growing concern the state of affairs in China. As many of you may know from news broadcasts, the Chinese people are nearing a starvation level. Apparently the Chinese government has decided to take what it needs, rather than ask. We have tried to keep a tight lid on the situation in Southeast Asia, but no doubt some of you already know that the People’s Liberation Army invaded Burma, Laos and Vietnam about 18 hours ago.

A Chinese type 93 nuclear submarine was forced to surface in Australian waters a few hours after the invasion. The United States has a Mutual Defense Pact with the UK dating from 1958 and renewed by President George W. Bush in 2004. The UK has asked for our help and we have responded by canceling all military leaves, activating the Guard and Reserves and preparing our Navy to take action in support of Australia.

There exists the possibility, however remote, that this conflict could escalate into a full blown World War. We have raised the Threat Level to yellow and raised the military readiness condition to DEFCON 3. I spoke personally with the Premier of Russia and the State Department has been in consultation with India and Pakistan. Both of those nations have gone to the highest alert status and as everyone knows, each is a nuclear power.

I do not know how this conflict is going to turn out, but I am addressing you tonight to suggest that all of you make such preparations as you deem advisable. While we do not perceive a threat of invasion, there exists the possibility of a nuclear confrontation. Coming on the heels of the UN invasion, such an event would have catastrophic results for this nation.

My advisors have persuaded me that there exists a Clear and Present Danger to the United States. I have called for a Joint Session of Congress tomorrow morning to present such evidence as the Executive Branch has to the Congress. I will not, at that time, call for a declaration of war under the War Powers act. I will however ask Congress for

an appropriation necessary to carry out this countries obligations under the various treaties we have with our allies.

In accordance with the provision of the Constitution, the Writ of Habeas Corpus will not be suspended. However, in view of the Clear and Present Danger to this country, the Solicitor General will approach the Supreme Court for an immediate ruling about your government's ability to temporarily limit the freedoms of the press contained in the 1st Amendment. We cannot, in my view, permit the press to become an instrument of the People Republic of China.

Take care, get prepared and stay tuned. We will make every effort to keep the public informed of our actions in this matter. God Bless America.

The Three Amigos In Iowa – Chapter 6 – War Footing

Needless to say, the Congress wasn't too happy with the President the next day when he made his speech before the Joint session. They had approved a trillion dollars a year for the next 8 years to build up the military and weren't taking kindly to a request for another \$100 billion to prosecute a possible war with China. However, impressed with the urgency of the situation, both houses approved the additional \$100 billion later that day. In a totally unprecedented move, the Supreme Court ruled, on the spot, that a Clear and Present Danger existed and that the government could limit for a period of 90 days, and subject to review, the freedom of the press. The Court went on to order that an independent panel of reporters be appointed to monitor the actions of the government and that the panel report any abuses directly to the Court.

Essentially, the War Powers Act limited the President to waging war for a period of no more than 90-days without the approval of Congress, as I understand it. However, in appropriating money to fund an action in support of our allies, one could argue that the Congress had implicitly approved of a war. There is no subtle distinction between a war and a national emergency according to the Supreme Court. But, in this day and age, that is probably a moot point. A war could be all but over in an hour.

“How well are the Australians prepared for a possible war?” Clarence asked.

“Bloody well, mate,” Gary chuckled, “Those blokes are ready that's for sure. I'd say about the same as the United States, but I've never been to Australia, so I wouldn't know for sure.”

It could be argued that the elections of 2000 had been the beginning of the end for the American Republic. Gore had won the popular vote, but Bush had won the Electoral College. The election had ended up being decided by the US Supreme Court. 2004 was worse. Gary had voted early on October 29, 2004 and did what he always did. When he was in doubt, he always voted Republican, not that it made much difference in California. Hadn't kept Barbara Boxer out of the Senate that was certain. In the elections of 1824, 1876, 1888, and 2000 the loser of the popular vote became President. In 1976, if Gerald Ford had won 5,500 more votes in Ohio he would have been reelected, despite having over a million fewer votes than Carter. In many recent American presidential elections (1948, 1960, 1968, 1992, 1996, and 2000), no single candidate achieved an absolute majority of the popular vote. The election of 2004 had been a nasty affair, perhaps because the US was in the middle of the Iraqi war and the Democrat ticket had a 'war hero' candidate.

The Democrats had packed the House and Senate in 2008 and had ended up screwing the pooch and getting kicked out. The interim government was mostly Republican and mostly non-politicians and in 2012, the Republicans once again took control of the White House and Senate, just to remind you of where we are in this story. The President, the former House Minority Leader, was in favor of isolationism and a strong mili-

tary buildup, à la Ronald Reagan. The US was making every effort to build a 600-ship Navy and the Air Force had been funded for an extraordinary number of the latest generation aircraft, the F-22, F-35 and additional B-2 bombers. That little price tag was a trillion a year for 8 years.

The Congress and the President had also done something unprecedented on the domestic front. They had eliminated a lot of welfare programs and had instituted a national healthcare program, to the chagrin of people like Hillary Clinton and Teddy Kennedy and like-minded people. In the process, they had eliminated MediCare, but with good national health insurance coverage, nobody really minded. However, this latest national emergency had the Democrats sharpening their swords. Were it not for the decision of the Supreme Court, you can bet the media would have been in the thick of things, too.

Fortunately, Aaron Brown was the #1 broadcaster on CNN and Aaron had a reasonable approach to the news. While it was obvious to even the casual observer that Brown didn't agree with the decision of the Supreme Court, he nevertheless avoided being arrested for lending Aid and Comfort to the enemy as had Geraldo. That boy just didn't know when to keep his mouth shut. Maybe he thought being a lawyer gave him some kind of special immunity.

Within the week, a 4-carrier strike group put to sea off the Pacific coast. Within a second week, a 4-carrier strike group set sail from Atlantic ports. The President had directed the military to dust off a bunch of stored weapons, nuclear in nature, and the task groups were well equipped to handle anything that came their way. In the process, the President abrogated several treaties, but he worked it out with the Russian Premier and Russia did the same thing. During the 2 weeks since the Chinese sub had been forced to surface off the Australian coast, things had gone from bad to worse with China advancing into Thailand and getting close to Malaysia. However, to this point in time, China had not seen fit to launch any missiles.

Aboard the SSN-21 Seawolf, longitude 180 degrees, latitude 60 degrees north...

"Con, Sonar," the 2d class called.

"Con aye," the reply came.

"Sir I have a Chinese 94-class submarine taking up a launch position," the sonar mate reported.

"Battle Stations, torpedo," the Skipper said, "Sonar, I'll be right there."

"What do we have here Chief?" the Skipper asked the COB.

"Sir, it looks like a class 94 boat taking up a position to launch its JL-2's," the COB reported.

“How sure are we of this information?” the Skipper asked.

“I’ve got multiple hatch openings,” the sonar mate reported.

“Con, Sonar,” the Skipper said, “This is the skipper, get me a firing solution on that Chinese sub.”

“Already laid in Skipper,” the XO reported.

“Fire tubes 1 and 3,” the Skipper ordered. “And take evasive action.”

Is it really that simple or does that only happen in a movie? It had better be that simple or our submarines aren’t worth the powder it would take to blow them straight to hell. Two Mark-48 ADCAP torpedoes sped toward the Chinese boomer. The Chinese sonar operator reported the launch of the torpedoes and the Chinese Skipper launched two shots in return, just before the Mark-48’s hit. The Seawolf was already engaged in evasive maneuvers and managed to avoid being hit by the two snapshots. The die was cast, however. The Chinese Skipper had managed to get off a burst transmission just before he lost his vessel.

The Chinese sonar man hadn’t had time to identify the signature of the torpedoes and the Chinese Skipper didn’t know if an Akula or one of the American boats was attacking him. Perhaps it was a moot point because he was dead. Beijing wasn’t sure whom to attack, so they did what any irrational person would do in similar circumstances, attack everyone and let God sort them out. What followed wasn’t pretty. The US and the Russia snapped to DEFCON 1, or the equivalent, and launched against China. Solved the starvation problem for the Chinese, but the Chinese action sure made things tough in other parts of the world. About half of the sea based Chinese missiles were successfully launched.

The 93-class boats that survived long enough to launch their cruise missiles, launched on Australia and Indonesia; the 92 class boat and the remaining 94 class boat launched on the Russia and the US. World War III was over before any of the missiles struck their targets. In a very brief span of less than 10 minutes, all of the missiles that were going to be launched had been launched. The Trident D missiles were never launched from the Ohio SSBN submarines because before they could be launched, the President had ordered them to stand down. Similarly, the Ohio SSGN subs never had a chance to launch their cruise missiles, having also been stood down. The missiles launched by Russia and the US were still in flight when both the Russia and the US stood down their sea launched missiles. Nothing had yet struck and the EAS system warbled its warning in the US.

Dividing their weapons as they did, the Chinese attacks against the Russia and US were damaging, but failed to destroy either country. There were just too many targets

and too few missiles, in fact, to destroy either country, let alone both. North Korea wisely cancelled their launches at the last moment. And, absent any launches from that country, the Russia detonated their 4 missiles in flight; the US had never launched against North Korea. How long does a nuclear war last? It depends upon who is involved and how many missiles they have. In this case, it was China against the US and the Russia and it was a very short war. The consequences, of that war were yet to be realized.

The US describes its nuclear force as a triad. It consists of land-based missiles and aircraft coupled with submarine launched missiles. The fastest reacting element of the triad is the land-based ICBM's. These missiles are solid fueled rockets that can be launched as fast as the right switches can be activated. The bombers take time to load and time to launch. The submarines have to be reached by ELF transmissions, they must surface and receive a burst transmission and they must prepare to launch. The beauty of the system is the redundancy. Should it happen that the US is unable to launch its bombers and its land-based ICBMs; there are enough Trident D's to take out any country. There is the old triad and the new triad. MAD or the balance of terror?

To meet the nation's defense goals in the 21st century, the first leg of the New Triad, the offensive strike leg, will go beyond the Cold War triad of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and long-range nuclear-armed bombers. ICBMs, SLBMs, bombers and nuclear weapons will, of course, continue to play a vital role. However, they will be just part of the first leg of the New Triad, integrated with new non-nuclear strategic capabilities that strengthen the credibility of our offensive deterrence.

The second leg of the New Triad requires development and deployment of both active and passive defenses – a recognition that offensive capabilities alone may not deter aggression in the new security environment of the 21st century. The events of September 11, 2001 underscore this reality. Active and passive defenses will not be perfect. However, by denying or reducing the effectiveness of limited attacks, defenses can discourage attacks, provide new capabilities for managing crises, and provide insurance against the failure of traditional deterrence.

The third leg of the New Triad is a responsive defense infrastructure. Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. defense infrastructure has contracted and our nuclear infrastructure has atrophied. New approaches to development and procurement of new capabilities are being designed so that it will not take 20 years or more to field new generations of weapon systems. With respect to the nuclear infrastructure, it needs to be repaired to increase confidence in the deployed forces, eliminate unneeded weapons, and mitigate the risks of technological surprise. Maintaining our ability to respond to large strategic changes can permit us to reduce our nuclear arsenal and, at the same time, dissuade adversaries from starting a competition in nuclear armaments.

But, how is the new triad new? Old triad, new triad, you'd end up just as dead. Ask the

Chinese; they now have first-hand experience. Oh, that's right, they are mostly all dead, never mind. How can a war be over before the first nuclear weapon explodes? Well, think about it for a minute. When they stop launching weapons, it is over. All that is left to do is the dying.

"Jeezus H.," Ron said, "We'd better head to the cave."

"What's the rush Ron," Gary asked, "I doubt the Chinese would target northern Iowa."

"Yeah well, the prevailing winds are from the west and we have to be concerned about fallout if they attack our Minuteman silos," Ron said, "Shake a leg."

"I figure that I have time to run into Floyd and pick up some more cigarettes," Gary replied. "You go ahead. Do you want me to get any smokes for you?"

"For crying out loud, the world is ending and he's worried about cigarettes," Ron said rhetorically. "Get me 6 cartons of Camel filters."

"What does Clarence smoke?" Gary asked.

"I don't know, get him Marlboro's," Ron said exasperated.

Gary already had been to town and had the cigarettes in the pickup, but he had decided to have a little fun at Ron's expense. He was glad they didn't live in California anymore; LA was sure to be a target. He showed up at the cave about 3 minutes behind Ron. He handed Ron and Clarence their cigarettes and went back to the pickup for his guns. Gar-Bear didn't figure that he had to rush; it would take the fallout 24-36 hours to reach Iowa. He slipped into his ALICE gear, grabbed his rifle and headed for the cave. People were still filing in from Floyd long after he had stored his rifle and gear and had a cup or two of coffee.

Why the nonchalance? Well, you can't live forever, now can you? Would the world be worth living in after a thermonuclear war? Gar-Bear guessed that he was about to find out, whether he wanted to or not. Should have bought more cigarettes, though.

The Three Amigos In Iowa – Chapter 7 – The Dying Part

What, you expected a more action-packed war? How long does it take to kill one-quarter to one-third of the world's population? It's kind of like an undiscovered asteroid hitting the planet except in that case, you might get more warning. And, even after the warheads explode, it only takes a while until you can come out from undercover. That is assuming that you had some place safe to hide in the first place. Sort of gives a whole new meaning to the idea of being prepared, doesn't it?

In the cave were two refurbished and recalibrated Civil Defense 'Geiger' counters. When the low level unit started to click, they shut the doors and kicked in the newly installed air purifiers. When the radiation level exceeded 50R/gr, they switched to the 500R unit. The radiation level rose, leveled off and slowly started to fall. The cave held a lot more than the residents of Floyd this time. A fair number of people who lived in mobile homes had shown up and there was plenty of room and more than enough supplies, so they let them in, answering the age old question about who you let in and who you didn't. They could have taken a lot more people, and it never quite got to the point that they had to analyze whether or not they had enough supplies. The cave could support the population of Floyd and a few more for a long time and Ralph had just bought a 6-week supply of food for 400 people.

Mt. Weather, shortly after the attack...

"How bad is it?" the president asked.

"Bad, but it could have been a lot worse," the Secretary of DHS replied. "It appears that they were primarily targeting military installations. If they had attacked only the Russians, or us it would have been a lot worse. But, they used their cruise missiles on Australia and Indonesia and divided their long-range missiles between the Russians and us."

"We have any idea of a death toll?" the President asked.

"No sir, it's too early to tell," DHS replied. "But, it must be a lot lower than expectations because the Chinese didn't have that many delivery systems and because of their target selection. Indonesia and Australia probably got hit with more weapons than we did. But, those were lower yield weapons and we just have no idea."

"The fleet safe?" the President asked. "And what about the Army?"

"It's too soon to estimate our losses, Mr. President, but they're light," the Chairman of the Joint Chief's replied.

"There aren't any winners in a thermonuclear war, but how did the world make out as a whole?" the President asked.

“The Chinese won’t be a threat for several generations,” the Chairman said. “Australia will dig out and we’ll lend a hand so it will recover. Indonesia is inconclusive, at the moment.”

Iowa...

“We should have taken those dangd Chinese out at the first sign of trouble,” Ron lamented.

“It would have just started the war sooner,” Gary suggested. “The radiation level never went over 400R above ground, so maybe we came through this attack better than we had any right to hope.”

“400R either killed a lot of livestock or made them very sick,” Steve said. “How long before we can get out and assess the damage?”

“I use the rule of 7’s, 46 days, after we first got any radiation,” Gary answered Steve.

“Then why is the radiation level going back up?” Becky asked.

“That’s probably the fallout from China,” Gary suggested. “Let’s face it folks, until we have a background level of 0.5R/hr, we shouldn’t even consider leaving this cave.

“What about all of those poor people who didn’t get much warning?” Becky asked next.

“Well, I think that everyone should have seen this attack coming,” Gary suggested. “There was one hell of a run on all of the grocery stores right after the President made that address, so it’s not like people didn’t have time to prepare.”

“Why did we buy Potassium Iodate instead of Potassium Iodide?” Lorraine asked.

“Because, dear, it’s just as good, maybe even better, and one hell of a lot cheaper,” Ralph explained to his wife. “Besides, it tastes better.”

Most of the people in the cave hadn’t given any consideration to the long-term effects of a nuclear exchange. Even when it became ‘safe’ to venture above ground, there were consequences that could last for a long time. The radiation was in the soil and could affect the food supply in many ways. The milk could have Strontium-90 in it for a long while and the food crops might even be affected.

Then there was the question of how much fallout there would be from a nuclear exchange. Bombs exploded on the surface produced much more fallout than airbursts. Boy, oh boy did the Chinese screw up. They should have nuked India and Pakistan. That way, they might not have been totally destroyed and the world would have had 3

fewer nuclear powers. You never get what you want, you know, it's not an ideal world. Besides, Russia had been rebuilding its military, which could have led to another cold war. Wasn't much chance of that now, or was there?

Washington...

The Capitol had been spared because the Chinese didn't figure they'd catch anyone there anyway and it was a reach for their ICBM's. When the 2 weeks ended, the government returned to Washington and the President ordered out the military to start cleaning things up. Like I said, the war was over before the warheads hit, all was left was the dying part and the cleanup after that. While they had all been trapped in Mt. Weather, the leaders of the House and Senate got together with the President and suggested that it was going to be very difficult to come up with more money to rebuild the nation. They suggested and he agreed to divide the trillion dollars a year between the military buildup and rebuilding the nation. Once they had an idea of how bad the situation was, the Congressional leaders agreed to tack on enough years after the 8-year period to ensure that buildup got completed.

However, when the military began to assess the damage, it was far less than anyone ever imagined it would be. The price tag to rebuild the nation came in at under \$1.25 trillion. Congress appropriated the additional funds and urged the President to put pressure on the Military Industrial Complex to cut the completion time on the expansion of the military's system. Some whiz kid in Congress had figured out that if they accelerated the buildup program, they might be able to avoid incurring any additional costs because they could avoid the inflationary pressures that drove up the costs of the equipment over time.

When the French had refused to support the US invasion of Iraq the people of the United States had quit calling 'French Fries' by that name in protest. This time, a lot of people quit going to Chinese restaurants. Go figure.

Iowa...

"The President is back in the White house," Ron declared, "Do you suppose that it would be ok for us to get the hell out of this cave?"

"What's the background radiation level?" Clarence asked.

"5R/hr," Ron said, "Gary and Ralph insist that we can't leave until it's down to 0.1R/hr."

"Maybe we'd better wait Ron," Clarence suggested. "I don't know diddly squat about radiation and I don't want to be glowing in the dark."

Ron went to Gary and Gary said that they could get out briefly, but that they should wear foot coverings and N-95 masks. 5R/gr wasn't all that dangerous for brief periods of

time, but... Ralph had purchased some dosimeters and everyone who went outside had to wear one. Once they were absolutely positive that it was ok to be outside, everyone would be permitted to leave. Perhaps they were being overly cautious out of their ignorance, but why take a chance? Children and young people of childbearing age would be the last people to be allowed out of the cave.

Television was back up and running and the President addressed the nation. He reassured everyone that in most places it was safe to come out of their shelters. He gave an '800' number where everyone could call if they were concerned about their immediate area. The government for a long time had reserved the '800' number and it connected the caller to his/her own states Emergency Management Agency. Local information was being updated hourly and daily and all one had to do was call.

The other major power to take a hit was the Russians. Unlike the US, the Russians had a civil defense program. "In the 39 largest cities of the former USSR every apartment house built after 1955 had a nuclear blast and fallout shelter built into the foundation. Every new factory also had a shelter system. Underneath Moscow there were 75 huge underground command posts, each one as large as the Pentagon. According to Gen. Keegan, these were protected from nuclear assault by four hundred feet of earth fill and a hundred feet of reinforced concrete. Huge storage containers were also detected by USAF intelligence. These contained water and diesel fuel." The Russians made out just fine. Australia did too, but Indonesia took it in the chops. Not that most Americans cared much about Indonesia, the population was 88% Muslim. Maybe American Muslims cared, but that was less than 4% of the US population.

Epilog...

The world recovered from World War III. How many more World Wars they could live through remained to be seen. The US completed the military buildup in 6 years and by 2020 nobody dared take on the US. Nobody. In the end, Russia and the United States formed a partnership with the United Kingdom and they learned to quit exporting their political systems. I often refer to a piece I once read called *Democracy in Abundance*. In that piece, which I've never been able to find again, the author explained why the US was wrong for trying to export Democracy. I happened to agree with the author in that instance and still do. In my view, the US needs to worry about maintaining its own Republican Democracy and quit trying to stuff it down everyone's throats. It is hard enough for a Democracy to survive. We are beginning to see, in many ways, the decline of our Democracy, in my humble opinion. I may be right and I may be wrong, it's always that simple. But, my favorite quote is *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*

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